

# press release

## AIBO Celebrates Five Years of Innovation and Intelligence



**Berlin, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2004** – The innovative and entertaining AIBO, Sony's four-legged artificial intelligence companion, celebrates its fifth anniversary this month with special activities across Europe. Since its launch in 1999, AIBO has thrilled customers worldwide with its free-spirited, fun-loving and inquisitive personality. Always at the cutting edge of technology, AIBO has utilized the latest developments in Artificial Intelligence to continue to evolve into a truly intelligent companion, capable of learning skills and tricks, recognising faces and voices, and even communicating over a wireless network. With more product development and software enhancements planned for 2004 and beyond, it's clear that the first five years are just the beginning in the amazing AIBO story.

The community of AIBO owners is increasingly growing and their enthusiasm for these unique companions is reflected in the independently run "AIBO Owners' Clubs" throughout Europe. "Every year, AIBO takes another step towards totally autonomous behaviour and intelligence," says Martin Newham, Founder and Leader of the AIBO Owner's Club in the UK "Our members are always being surprised by the way their AIBO reacts to different experiences, learns new attributes and adapts to life in the home. It's an exciting time for AIBO and all of us are looking forward to the latest developments including new software, further enhancing AIBO's connectivity. After five years, it's good to see the concept is as fresh, fascinating and inspiring as the day when it was first launched!"

**SONY**

## **Five Years Young and Going Strong!**

AIBO has been an unqualified success story. Since its global launch in 1999, over 130,000 AIBO Entertainment Robots have been sold across the world (excluding sales of the latest ERS-7 model), bringing pleasure and companionship to homes in many diverse countries. The majority of early customers were technophiles, reasonably affluent people with a passion for IT technology and keen to experience the innovative AIBO concept. But since the arrival of the third generation AIBO, the ERS-7, with its enhanced functionality and real connectivity features, the customer profile of AIBO has become more mainstream. This second wave of buyers includes women as well as men with socially integrated lifestyles looking for companionship at home and new ways of wireless entertainment. The highly intelligent AIBO ERS-7 has certainly enhanced the popularity and appeal of the AIBO concept, creating a solid platform for continuous development and success over the next five years.

“AIBO has been well accepted in many European countries,” says Nicolas Babin, Director of Sony Entertainment Europe. “Intelligent features such as voice recognition, the ability to learn new behaviours and to communicate with its owner via the Internet have quickly captured the imagination of people across the continent. The European market has established itself as one the most important for AIBO and we are committed to developing even more advanced technology and software upgrades to expand the demand for entertainment robots.”

## **Special Events Across Europe!**

Sony will be celebrating the fifth anniversary of AIBO with a variety of high profile events both on the street and on the internet. In the UK, there will be three special anniversary promotional days held with selected AIBO dealers throughout May and June. Visitors will have the chance to win an AIBO ERS-7 in a special anniversary competition. A similar event including a full size RoboCup demo will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> May at the Sony Style Store in Berlin. Sony will also be mailing a 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary birthday e-card to AIBO owners and prospective owners across Europe on 11<sup>th</sup> May to celebrate the occasion.

Further activities will run online. From 6<sup>th</sup> May, all western European Sony websites as well as the AIBO Europe site at [www.eu.aibo.com](http://www.eu.aibo.com) will feature a magazine article announcing the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. On 11<sup>th</sup> May, these sites will also include a specially commissioned online flash animation, highlighting the evolution of AIBO over the past five years.

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**About Sony:**

Sony manufactures audio, video, communications and information technology products for the global consumer and professional markets. With its music, pictures, game and online businesses, Sony is uniquely positioned to become a leading personal broadband entertainment company in the 21st century. In Europe, Sony recorded consolidated annual sales of EUR 13.47 billion (yen 1,765 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2004, based on an average market exchange rate for the same period of yen 131 to the EUR. Sony Europe, headquartered at the Sony Center am Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, is responsible for the company's European electronics business and registered consolidated sales of EUR 8.71 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2004.

For more information on Sony Europe, please visit <http://www.sony-europe.com>

For more information on AIBO, please visit <http://www.eu.aibo.com> and <http://www.aiboworld.tv>